

Debt-ceiling 'crisis' made on Wall Street Politicians rob workers, protect the wealthy

By Fred Goldstein

Whether or not a deal is reached in Washington on how to raise the debt ceiling and avoid a government default, the workers and the oppressed have no independent voice in the debate. The process gives them no choice but to accept the result of venomous political warfare in the capitalist establishment.

Several factors have made the political warfare between the big business parties over raising the government debt ceiling especially turbulent. First, there is the upcoming 2012 presidential election and the struggle over control of the federal government and its \$4 trillion budget.

Aggravating this warfare is the emergence of the Tea Party wing of the Republican Party, which has pushed the politics of the negotiations further and further to the right.

Finally, the struggle takes place against the background of the capitalist economic crisis.

The underlying problem of the deficit is the massive government emergency spending of trillions of dollars for bank and corporate bailouts that were meant to stave off a world capitalist crisis. In the short run, however, the debt-ceiling crisis is politically driven.

The struggle began with the Republicans refusing to agree to raise the debt ceiling unless the Obama administration agreed to cut the federal deficit by cutting Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and other social spending that benefits the broad masses. The Obama administration agreed to massive cuts in entitlements, but not enough to satisfy the right.

The Republicans also want to block any increase in tax payments by the rich. Obama wants them to pay a small part of the bill.

In this struggle over the terms of raising the debt ceiling, the workers are supposed to choose one of the different options posed by factions of the big business parties.

Debt ceiling fight is over how to protect the rich

The fury over raising the government's debt ceiling is, at bottom, a fight over two things: 1) how to ensure continued government payments of billions of dollars to rich, coupon-clipping bondholders; and 2) how many trillions of dollars can be taken from the entitlements due the workers and the oppressed in the form of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and other benefits.

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NORWAY COMMENTARY

Terrorist aimed to mobilize racism Multinational working-class unity can defeat it

By John Catalinotto

On July 22 a bomb attack on central Oslo and a massacre at an island Labor Party summer camp killed 76 people, most of them youths. It was the worst such tragedy in that country of 4.8 million people since World War II.

The world asked what crisis, what degeneration, could be poisoning society so that such a disaster would occur in a place as apparently free of strife as Norway.

The BBC, the New York Times and other corporate media throughout the U.S. and Europe immediately sought out "anti-terror experts," who immediately blamed "Islamic terrorists." The media repeated this charge at full

volume. The experts even underlined NATO-member Norway's quiet role in the occupation of Afghanistan and the bombing of Libya as the possible motives of what they called the "terrorist" acts.

They were completely wrong. Moreover, their own words and acts showed the media's complicity in the crime.

Journalism Professor Rune Otosen, cited in a Norwegian workers' daily, Klassekampen (Class Struggle), said that the New York Times took "an unreasonably long time" to change its tune even after it was clear that a Christian Norwegian was the mass murderer. Then the media avoided calling the Norwegian a terrorist, let

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PHILIPPINES

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE ASSEMBLY



Quezon City, Manila, July 6. Read article on page 8.

PHOTO: WOMEN'S ALLIANCE ASSEMBLY

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Lynne Stewart remembers Geronimo Pratt

This edited commentary was written June 6 by Lynne Stewart, a people’s lawyer and political prisoner, in tribute to the former Black Panther leader who died earlier this year. Send letters and cards to: Lynne Stewart 53504-054, FMC Carswell, Federal Medical Center, P.O. Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127. Go to lynnestewart.org, projectsalam.org and thejerichomovement.com.



Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt



Lynne Stewart

WWW PHOTO

The untimely death of Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt has hit me very hard because it reminds me of all the work yet to be done. Not only the liberation of the oppressed, to which Geronimo dedicated himself as a young man and again after his release, but also the liberation of those locked away in the torture chambers inside the U.S.A.

The loss of Geronimo is so difficult because he was robbed of the opportunity to contribute to the long-term struggle for liberation of the Black community in his most productive years. Yes, there was always a mention or a placard “Free Geronimo Pratt!”, but his ability to publicly inspire and uplift was jailed at San Quentin. He was there in his 20s and 30s and 40s. The movement suffered. ... Hoover and his like triumphed. We must now undo this evil.

By torture chambers I mean, of course, the prison “holes”; those places of solitary confinement, where loneliness and total lack of human contact drive people mad. Even the strong are “modified.” Many of those who

have been jailed in this way are political prisoners. Many of them have been in 24-hour lockdown for more than 20 years and face the rest of their lives there.

I really don’t need to name names — they are engraved on my heart and I hope on yours. Just check the Jericho website for a complete rundown. And also, dare I say it, the Project SALAM of Muslims wrongfully imprisoned. If we are spared and are still in the world and able to act and activate, this is our primary obligation — if we think of ourselves as political-to take up this struggle and liberate those behind bars. As Mutulu Shakur wrote to me (and I paraphrase), the faith of those who gave their all and still wait for the dedicated comrades, the People, to bring them home is greater than any religious devotion.

Geronimo’s death reminds us of this paramount obligation. The enemy, in the Nebraska and New York and Louisiana prisons, will never act until those unjust imprisonments become more detrimental to them and their system than freeing our brothers and sisters.

Action! Action! Change! Change!

Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt, presente! Live like him! ☐

Another Black man tased to death by police

By Larry Hales

“He looked right at me and said, ‘Babe, help me I’m dying.’” These were Alonzo Ashley’s last words to his companion, Elaina, words she said in tears to an interviewer for the Denver FOX News affiliate.

Ashley at the time was on the ground after a contact taser was used by Denver Police to subdue him, leading him to convulse and then become unconscious.

The incident occurred at the Denver Zoo July 18, where, according to Ashley’s family, he had gone three times in one week. Zoo officials said one of their staff had seen Ashley passed out near the elephant exhibit. When zoo security responded, Ashley was drinking from a water fountain and wetting his head. Elaina says that earlier he had vomited.

Ashley asked the zoo security to go away several times, but instead of leaving the couple alone or calling for medical help for someone exhibiting signs of a heat-related illness, zoo security called the Denver police.

Eighteen police cars showed up on the scene, and the end result was another young Black man, 29-year-old Ashley, killed.

Extreme high temperatures starting in the mid-90s and in many instances exceeding the 100-degree mark have lasted for weeks throughout the U.S. Dozens, main-

ly in the Midwest, have died due to heat-related illness. According to Elaina, Ashley was suffering from heat stroke, with symptoms that include restlessness, anxiety, vomiting, unconsciousness and heavy sweating.

Since Ashley’s death, both zoo and the police officials have gone on the offensive to try to depict the victim as unruly and drug addicted.

The Denver Zoo is claiming that Ashley began saying to the staff that he was a “lion” and that when security was calling the police he attacked them. Sonny Jackson, Denver Police Department spokesperson, says Ashley was acting irrationally and that when police tried to subdue him, he had “extraordinary strength.”

Denver Police stated that they were only called because of a domestic dispute, which contradicts the zoo officials’ account. Elaina says there was no domestic dispute.

This is the second time in a year that the claim of “extraordinary strength” was used as an excuse for the police agency to act violently. Marvin Booker, a 53-year-old homeless Black male, a street preacher who weighed only 135 pounds, was tased and pinned down by five sheriff’s deputies in the Denver County Jail because they would not let him retrieve his shoes. Booker died, and the sheriff’s deputies were cleared of any wrongdoing.

The brutality or death of a person of color at the hands

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Pelican Bay prison hunger strikers declare victory

By Sharon Danann

Leaders of the hunger strike in the Security Housing Unit at California’s Pelican Bay State Prison accepted an offer July 20 from the California Department of Correction and Rehabilitation and have ended their weeks-long action. Members of the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity coalition confirmed reports of the hunger strike’s end after speaking with some of the prisoners involved. (prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com, July 22) The CDCR reported that as of 1 p.m. on July 20 all those who had been fasting at Pelican Bay had resumed eating. (www.sfgate.com, July 22)

Having been without food for 21 days, the leaders opted to “live to fight for justice another day,” according to mediator Dorsey Nunn. (times-standard.com, July 22) The CDCR offer included expanded educational programs, wall calendars and all-weather caps. The CDCR also committed to a review of SHU and gang-related policies.

A key accomplishment of the hunger strike has been to bring attention to the issue of torture in U.S. prisons. Currently

inmates at Pelican Bay cannot be transferred out of their confinement in the SHU unless they turn in someone else for gang-related activities. Prisoners opposed to doing so on principle or in fear of retribution, or who have no such information, including those in the SHU for political beliefs, have been locked in SHUs indefinitely. Black Panther members incarcerated in the 1970s are among the inmates who have spent decades in isolation.

The United Nations Committee Against Torture has stated that long-term solitary confinement is in violation of prohibitions against torture, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Supporters of the courageous prisoners continued to hit the streets with rallies July 22 and 23 in Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and Chino, Calif.; and in Los Angeles, Chicago and Montreal. Plans are going forward for a march on CDCR headquarters in Sacramento, Calif.; a rally at the California State building in San Francisco; and a meeting with family members and loved ones of prisoners in Oakland.

High-spirited activists marched up the quarter-mile driveway of Ohio State Penitentiary in Youngstown, Ohio, on July 23,

drumming on paint buckets and pots, until they were turned back by guards near the gate to the Supermax. In Baltimore on July 21, the blazing heat did not stop protesters outside the city jail from drawing support from passersby, who responded positively to the “Jobs not jails” theme.

Struggle against torture continues

The hunger strike has continued at three California state prisons. More than 400 inmates are refusing food at Corcoran and more than 100 at Tehachapi. The PHSS blog quoted a friend of a Calipatria prison hunger striker as saying, “I’m 100 percent sure that at least 300 prisoners are still supporting each other and going strong, refusing food and demanding the CDCR change conditions of solitary confinement and policies around gang validation.” (July 20)

According to a spokesperson for the court-appointed receiver overseeing prison health care, an inmate at Tehachapi had lost 29 pounds. (Los Angeles Times, July 19) The CDCR claimed to be medically monitoring 49 prisoners who had lost more than 10 pounds, but prisoner advocates disputed both the numbers and

the quality of medical attention, most of which was “drive-by checks.” (PHSS conference call, July 18)

The PHSS was aware of “dozens” of hunger strikers who had lost over 20 pounds and who were experiencing fainting or irregular heartbeats. Nunn stated that the prison hospital at Pelican Bay was filled with inmates receiving fluids by IV. Some had “started to refuse water,” but many others were having trouble keeping ingested water down. Nunn added, “It is truly a matter of luck and/or untiring spirit that nobody has died so far.” (colorlines.com, July 20)

PHSS is encouraging solidarity actions to continue to make sure the CDCR makes good on its promises and to prevent retaliation against hunger strikers. Hunger strikers not in SHUs have been thrown in solitary as punishment for acts of solidarity. (PHSS blog, July 22)

This historic hunger strike of 6,600 inmates, uniting without regard to race, religion, ethnicity or group affiliation, has inspired prisoners and supporters to new acts of courage and defiance. Support the California hunger strikers and build the prisoners’ movement everywhere! □

SAN FRANCISCO

Black youth gunned down by police

By Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

Kenneth Harding, a 19-year-old African-American man, was shot and killed by San Francisco police in the Bay View neighborhood June 16. His “crime”? Not having a transfer pass from the Muni public transit system to show that he had paid his \$2 fare. When approached by the police, Harding took off running and was shot at least 10 times by the police.

A large, angry crowd gathered in the busy shopping area as the young man lay writhing on the sidewalk, cordoned off by the police. A bystander caught the police attack on video, showing Harding lying alone for several minutes on the ground, bleeding profusely, without any police officers or medical technicians coming to his aid.

The police instead were busy training

their guns on the dying Black youth and roughly keeping away concerned community members who were outraged by this latest police atrocity. Harding was finally taken to a local hospital, where he died.

Despite disinformation attempts by the police stating that Harding shot at the police first and that he was a parolee wanted for questioning in Washington State, no gun was found at the scene at the time of his murder. Additionally, eyewitnesses clearly stated that Harding never turned around after police started chasing him.

ABC Channel 7 news interviewed Trivon Dixon, who said, “He was running. How could he be a threat in retreat? And he wasn’t running backwards, turning around shooting. He was in full throttle, running away from the police. I don’t see in any way how he could be a threat to the police.”

Several people who witnessed the police attack on Harding stayed and watched while firefighters washed his blood off the sidewalk. In an eyewitness account on his Facebook page, Rick Hauptman noted, “The police seemed almost jolly. I saw many handshakes among them; I couldn’t figure that out. Were they solely being respectful to their colleagues and to senior officers, or was it something else?”

Police killings are not new to this city. In fact, there has been an epidemic of police brutality and murders.

On July 3, a homeless man, Charles Hill, who could barely stand, was shot and killed by the Bay Area Rapid Transit police. Hill is the third person killed by BART in three years.

The community still mourns the police killing of Oscar Grant, another young man, who was shot and killed on Jan. 1, 2009, on the platform of the Fruitvale BART station. Grant was unarmed and physically restrained by the police at the time that he was shot at point-blank range. Grant’s death has sparked several demonstrations and community rebellions in Oakland.

Police terror, fare hikes connected

The community has been organizing to demand justice for Harding and all victims of police brutality and murder. On July 18, a news conference was held by the Idriss Stelley Foundation and SF Education Not Incarceration, at the corner of Oakdale and 3rd in the Bay View neighborhood. The Idriss Stelley Foundation is the group that has been spearheading this city’s fightback against police brutality for many years.

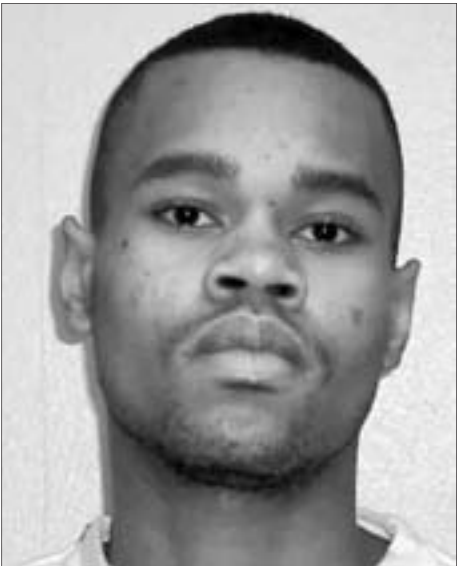
On July 19, approximately 150 people gathered at Dolores Park in the Mission Neighborhood to protest Harding’s killing. The spirited demonstration wound its way through the Mission and Castro districts where protesters disrupted traffic and stormed one of the Muni stations. Police arrested 43 people by the end of the protest.

The following evening, at a town hall meeting organized by a local minister at the Bay View Opera House, SF Police Chief Greg Suhr was shouted down by an angry crowd of over 300 Bay View residents.

Despite the fact that the police are now claiming that Harding had a gun and that he had gun residue on his hand, the community is demanding answers to the real crime — the senseless killing of Kenneth Harding for not paying his bus fare.

“How come a Black man can get shot for not having a transfer? How come a Black man has to be so terrorized that he feels that he has to run for not having a transfer? These kinds of killings have not, would not, do not ever happen in white communities anywhere in the world,” notes Malaika Kambon in a Facebook discussion about the murder.

Besides the blatant racism of the SFPD, there’s another glaring reason why Harding was killed over not paying his Muni fare. Muni riders have been waging a battle for lower fares for years. Muni workers recently came close to striking as the city has demanded more cuts in pensions and wages.



Kenneth Harding PHOTO: SF BAY VIEW

In an article written by Willie Ratcliff, publisher of the San Francisco Bay View newspaper on July 18, he mentions a recent demonstration by a Mission District-based community organization at the end of June, calling for free Muni and transit passes for all passengers.

According to Ratcliff, “The San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni) has followed up major rate increases in recent years with greatly intensified police fare enforcement, imposing heavy fines and even jail time for riders who are unable to prove by showing a paper transfer that they paid their fare.”

In Kenneth Harding’s case, no transfer translated into an unprovoked racist murder by the police. This killing is sparking a mass movement here. The struggle against police murders and brutality will continue to grow in the Bay Area, as will the fight for justice for all poor and working people.

For more information, contact the Idriss Stelley Foundation, 415-595-8251 or the SF Bay View Newspaper at sfbayview.com.

Source: June 18 article by Willie Ratcliff reprinted in the online edition of SF Bay View at <http://tinyurl.com/3n3w6x6>

Another Black man tased to death

Continued from page 2

of a police agency in the Colorado Front Range, which includes Denver, Aurora, Colorado Springs, Greeley and seven other localities, is nothing new. State-wide victims of police brutality over the past 10 years include Paul Childs, Frank Lobato, Greg Smith, Harrison Owens, Jamaal Bonner, Michael DeHerrera, Shawn Johnson, Marvin Booker, Cassidy Rice and Loree McCormick Rice.

Add Alonzo Ashley to the list. His only crime was that he chose to go to the zoo while Black, suffered from a heat-related illness, and tried to cool himself off.

His family now fights for justice and to defend him from the police allegations, and his companion is left to miss her “best friend and lover.” □

New York City

Budget cuts clog courts, increase jail time

By Julie Fry
New York

As the massive budget cuts agreed upon this spring by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the New York legislature are imposed on workers and the oppressed throughout the state, those who seek justice through an already massively unjust court system are finding themselves at an even greater disadvantage.

This year's state budget includes \$170 million in cuts to the state Office of Court Administration, which, coupled with an equal amount of cuts in the money spent on arrests or evictions in this state, might be cause for celebration for the poor and oppressed.

Instead, these cuts have led to a reduction in court hours without a commensurate reduction in arrests. This means those seeking what little relief there is to be gained from the bourgeois court system are forced to wait much longer. Often this wait takes place in jail.

In response to the budget cuts, OCA has mandated an across-the-board reduction in court hours. Before the cuts, courts would stay open for as many hours as were necessary to hear every case on that day's schedule. Often, in high-volume courts like criminal courts in Brooklyn or the Bronx in New York City, this meant that courts were open well into the evening.

In housing court, tenants could file

emergency petitions to stop evictions throughout the workday. But the cut in hours means that people who have waited all day for their cases to be heard are rescheduled and forced to miss yet another day's work or, worse, sit in jail even longer for petty misdemeanor offenses. Tenants' lawyers from the Legal Aid Society threatened legal action unless the city agreed to stop marshals from executing evictions after the courts closed.

The budget cuts have most starkly affected those who have been arrested and have yet to be arraigned, meaning formally charged with an offense or crime. The state constitution in New York mandates that arraignments take place within 24 hours of an arrest. This right was won through a lawsuit 20 years ago filed by lawyers at the Legal Aid Society. Before the suit, it was common for people to wait in jail for two, three, even four days without seeing a lawyer or a judge. This year's budget cuts are threatening to make that wait the norm again for most people arrested in New York City.

OCA has cut arraignment hours by as much as 50 percent on the weekends in every borough in the city, meaning there is no longer time to arraign everyone who has been arrested within 24 hours. But the larger problem stems from the New York Police Department, which arrests tens of thousands of people every year for the pettiest of offenses, such as littering or sleeping on the subway.

Cops victimize oppressed communities

The court system is clogged every day with poor people who are victims of pure police harassment, arrested for "offenses" that those outside of oppressed communities would never be punished for. Last year in New York, the NYPD arrested over 50,000 people for marijuana possession. Almost all of them were Black or Latino/a.

Thousands more were arrested for so-called "quality of life" offenses such as possessing an open container of alcohol in public or operating a bicycle on a sidewalk. These arrestees, sometimes accused of offenses that are punishable only with fines, spend days in jail before even seeing a judge. They receive more than the maximum sentence for their violations before even setting foot in a courtroom.

Although these petty offenses rarely lead to criminal convictions for those accused, what these arrests really represent is the day-to-day harassment by the police that occurs in oppressed communities throughout the city. People are stopped, searched and arrested on the skimpiest of pretexts. Now with these new cuts, people spend days in jail before ultimately being released. They often lose their jobs and have no one to provide child care for their children.

Those arrested are kept in overcrowded, filthy cells, with constant mice and rodent infestation. They are exposed to extreme hot or cold temperatures. Recently in Brooklyn Criminal Court, a broken toilet in the women's holding area caused

raw sewage to spill throughout the entire holding area twice in one week.

Those arrested with reported or obvious medical conditions face the worst conditions. In Brooklyn, they are separated from the general population and kept in an open space with their wrists handcuffed to a metal pole at or above their head level.

The unionized attorneys at the Legal Aid Society, which represents most defendants in criminal cases in New York City, have been organizing to improve conditions for their clients. They have been pushing management to take emergency legal action against the city, in the form of a mass writ of habeas corpus, for the city's continuous violation of the 24-hour arraignment law.

The lawyers demand an end to arrests for petty quality-of-life crimes and a rollback of the cuts in court hours. The attorneys recently received a partial victory when, under increased public pressure resulting from the union's efforts, the city agreed to extend arraignment hours in Brooklyn, where the cuts had been the steepest and conditions the worst.

Buoyed by this initial success, the union is planning to escalate its efforts to both decrease the time and improve the conditions of people waiting to be arraigned in New York City, both through increasing public pressure and legal action if necessary.

The writer works for Legal Aid in Brooklyn.

No way for a union to act

UAW leader gives up wages to protect GM's profits

By Martha Grevatt

This July 26 is the day of the traditional handshake across the table — when contract negotiations begin between Ford, General Motors and Chrysler, and the United Auto Workers. UAW President Bob King is trying to convince the membership that asking for raises is a bad idea at this time.

"The transnational auto companies have gained a large percentage of the United States market, in part by keeping their total labor costs under what is paid by the unionized automakers," according to an article in the July/August issue of the UAW magazine Solidarity. "The labor costs at Toyota — the largest transnational company — set the pattern that union workers **had** [*WW emphasis*] to follow.

"The dilemma is clear: If the UAW bargains fixed cost compensation from the unionized companies that is higher than the nonunion companies, the added fixed costs of the domestic automakers will harm the competitiveness of the unionized companies, making our products more expensive or reducing the revenue margin needed for new product investment."

What isn't stated is that, with concessions made in the 2007 contract and the 2009 modifications, unionized U.S. autoworkers have caught up (or down!) with their non-union counterparts in reducing

hourly labor costs. At Chrysler total hourly compensation — which includes health benefits, pension contributions, life insurance, sick pay, vacation and holiday pay and more — averages around \$49 an hour. At Toyota the figure is about \$55 an hour! (Reuters, July 4)

Moreover, through decades of restructuring, productivity has skyrocketed. This has led to drastic shrinking of the workforce and dozens of plant closings-cost savings pocketed by the companies and by Wall Street.

Not one to appreciate worker sacrifice, Chrysler and Ford have stated that they have no intention of giving any raises and GM is crying for cuts in health-care costs.

Competitiveness on the backs of low-paid workers

A new wave of autoworkers-many of them women and workers of color-are coming into the plants at half the wage of the previous generation.

GM's subcompact assembly plant in Lake Orion, Mich., was the subject of a front page article in the July 12 New York Times entitled, "With Chevrolet Sonic, GM stands automaking on its head."

"The radically revamped factory here," explained the Times, "operates with fewer and cheaper workers, many of whom are paid \$14 an hour rather than the full UAW wage of \$28 an hour." This came about

through a secret deal between the UAW and GM allowing the company to pay the lower wage to 40 percent of the workforce now and eventually all production workers in the plant.

The agreement, which rank-and-file workers were not allowed to vote on, was cooked up when "negotiators from the company and the union began brainstorming about what it would take to make a profitable subcompact car in the United States." Many workers had to transfer to out-of-state plants to keep their normal rate of pay. Hundreds of contract employees are working alongside UAW workers for only \$10 an hour.

It doesn't take much insight to figure that "fewer and cheaper workers" equal higher profits. Towards this end GM invested a record \$545 million in retooling Lake Orion. If the Sonic and the higher-priced Buick Verano sell well, "fewer and cheaper workers" will allow GM to more than recover its investment.

In the meantime, who is paying for this half-billion dollar gamble? That \$545 million could allow the plant's 720 lower tier workers to make the same pay as everyone else for the next 27 years! If wage increases are "uncompetitive" because they raise the price of union-made vehicles, can't the same be said for the billions spent on retooling and building new, modern plants all over the world?

What about the billions in profits that Ford, GM and Chrysler are raking in? If competitiveness is the goal, why not lower prices by reducing profits instead of wages? In the 1950s the UAW demanded that the companies keep car prices affordable.

The UAW's embrace of tiered wages, which began at Caterpillar in the 1990s and is now widespread, has had disas-

trous consequences. The situation at Nexteer in Saginaw, Mich., should be a wake-up call.

Originally a GM steering plant, Nexteer became part of Delphi when GM spun off its parts division. Then UAW-represented Delphi workers agreed to a lower wage for new hires. In 2007, with Delphi in bankruptcy and lower-paid workers now the majority, a new contract eliminated the higher tier.

When Delphi emerged from bankruptcy, GM bought the plant back, only to put it up for sale. Union members reluctantly agreed to further pay cuts and additional wage tiers demanded by the buyer, Nexteer, to keep their plant open.

Now members of UAW Local 699 work under a confusing and exploitive arrangement with nine different pay "buckets." Most are below the average U.S. manufacturing wage of \$18-an-hour-based on date of hire and the level of job complexity.

This is what UAW members at the Detroit Three — and if the trend is unchecked the whole labor movement — could look forward to in the future.

Many rank-and-file workers view two-tier and multi-tier pay systems as a danger to the union, and believe that reinstituting pay equality should be a priority for these negotiations. They are responding favorably to leaflets from Autoworkers Caravan calling on them to "defend union solidarity" and vote down any contract with tiered wages. The group is holding a forum on Aug. 13 on the devastating effects of unequal pay structures.

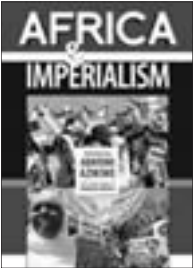
Autoworkers here — and all workers up against demands for yet more concessions — would do well to adopt the attitude of the Greek working class and refuse to pay the cost of a crisis they did not create. □

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General Assembly Aug. 2 call

'Stop the bull, then occupy Wall Street'

By Dee Knight
New York

Organizers of the three-week-long Bloombergville encampment in New York during June and July are calling for a General Assembly on Wall Street Aug. 2 to launch a campaign against the debt ceiling deal due that day.

In their call for the General Assembly, New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts said: "National politicians are using the Aug. 2 deadline on raising the debt ceiling as an excuse to attack social programs we are entitled to by law — Social Security, food stamps, Medicare/Medicaid, and so on. In the midst of massive and growing joblessness, and increased homelessness, the president and Congress are hatching an agreement to swap massive cuts to such social programs for meager new tax revenues."

NYABC asks, "Is this really necessary? We say stop the wars and cut the war budget! Tax the rich and close the corporate tax loopholes! Make the bankers pay!"

NYABC will assemble in the triangle near the bull sculpture on Broadway just south of Wall Street. A short rally will

give those affected by cuts in Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid, food stamps and other federally — funded programs a chance to speak their minds. The group will deliver notice to Wall Street of plans for a large-scale occupation beginning Sept. 17.

Organizers emphasize that the Aug. 2 action is just the beginning of a city-wide campaign-part of a national effort-to resist and defeat the brutal assault on people's needs and legal rights the Washington deal signifies. Members of New York public-sector unions plan to contact active and retired members, emphasizing that the threats to Social Security amount to theft of lifetimes of workers' wages. As the call says, "cutting Medicare for seniors and Medicaid for the poorest people would only further impoverish people and add to deteriorating health conditions for all."

The campaign will reach out to people who depend on Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid, encouraging them to fight the cuts, and to join with others, especially youth, who are being robbed and betrayed by the Washington deal. NYABC says, "Youth face grim prospects — a choice between going to war, prison,

or an endless search for non-existent jobs. We demand a real future!"

Don't take one cent from the people!

Responding to politicians' talk of "cutting back entitlements," NYABC says, "What's an 'entitlement'? Something that belongs to us by law! Social Security is part of our wages, deducted from every paycheck. We pay for Medicare, Medicaid, SSI, food stamps, and all the rest with our taxes. Even the money the government has used to bail out the banks comes from our paychecks. We have a right to demand that the money be used to invest in jobs, education, health care and infrastructure — not bankers' speculation."

NYABC says Social Security "is not broke. There is \$2.6 trillion in the Social Security trust fund — enough to fund the system for decades. If the fund really needs more money, the government can lift the cap on the highest-paid people and make all their salaries subject to Social Security deductions. Now they pay only on the first \$107,000 earned each year. Also, in order to really replenish the fund, reduce the retirement age and increase benefits, and put the millions of unemployed back to work and raise

wages. That would instantly solve any hypothetical financial problems of Social Security."

The government refuses to tax the rich while giving bailouts to the banks. NYABC asks "What are the banks doing with our money — mostly speculating in foreign currency. They claim they need tax breaks to create jobs. They're not creating jobs. But they are stuffing their bank accounts. In 2010 the top 500 CEOs paid themselves an average of \$11.4 million each — a 23-percent increase over 2009. Meanwhile, workers' wages are declining. Unemployment is rising. Hunger and homelessness are increasing."

The NYABC call concludes "This deal will bring suffering and hardship so the bankers get paid interest on their bonds. Enough already! Tell Wall Street and the bankers no! Workers need a massive government jobs program. We need housing and an end to foreclosures and evictions."

We need an end to the assault on education, health care and pensions. And we need an end to oppression and war!

For more information, contact New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts at www.nocutsny.wordpress.com or email Labor-CommunityForum@gmail.com. □

On many fronts

Wisconsin struggle moves forward

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee

The candidate for senator who was endorsed by the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO won a landslide victory on July 19 in the first of nine summer recall races. He is Sen. Dave Hansen, one of the 14 state senators who opposed the assault on collective bargaining rights led by Gov. Scott Walker and his pro-corporate cronies in February.

That Hansen overwhelmingly defeated the reactionary Republican candidate demonstrates strong opposition by workers and their allies to the reactionaries' attack on union rights, public education and health care. The recalls have become a focal point in the effort to push back the right wing and their extreme anti-worker, austerity agenda.

The labor federation's "Truth Tour" bus that began rolling through the state on July 16 is mobilizing for the recall elections set for Aug. 9 and 16. This tour is bolstered statewide by tens of thousands of poor and working people, who are knocking on doors, making phone calls and protesting. They are confronting Walker and his cohorts wherever they show up.

"The people of Green Bay are sending a strong message to undemocratic leaders who are ramming through attacks on Wisconsin workers and communities," said Phil Neuenfeldt, president of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO. "Wisconsin will not stand for it." (www.wisafclcio.org)

Building a strong mass movement

Christine Neumann-Ortiz, executive director of Voces de la Frontera, the Milwaukee-based immigrant rights organization, supports the recalls and the mass mobilizations for them. However, she emphasizes the critical importance of the growing Latino/a community in the United States and the power of independent, grassroots struggle.

Neumann-Ortiz, writing in the July issue of Voces de la Frontera newspaper, says in an article entitled "The Latino

Vote in 2012" that the 2010 Census recorded that Latinos/as account for 5.9 percent of Wisconsin's population, or 336,056 people. Milwaukee County has the largest concentration of Latinos/as with 126,039, followed by Dane County (Madison) with 28,925."

She explains that there has been a 74 percent growth in the Latino/a population in Wisconsin since 2000, with significant growth in rural districts where the billion-dollar dairy and agricultural industries are based. Moreover, the article reports that the census counted 50.5 million Latinos/as in the United States, equaling 16.3 percent of the entire population. The Latino/a population accounted for most of the nation's growth — 56 percent — between 2000 and 2010.

"Politicians from both parties should not take the Latino vote for granted," wrote Neumann-Ortiz. "Voters who want to see change happen cannot just expect change to be delivered from the ballot box. We must continue to build an organized community that advocates for its rights in the workplace, in schools, and in every aspect of our lives, and that forms important alliances in order to create a strong mass movement to achieve the economic and social justice we seek."



Carlos Montes wearing cap.

PHOTO: COMMITTEE TO STOP FBI REPRESSION

(www.vdlf.org).

With Latinos/as now making up 15 percent of Milwaukee's residents and the African-American community comprising 40 percent, oppressed peoples now make up the majority population of this working-class city. This is an important development and bodes well for the growth of mass struggle here.

Fighting FBI repression

As part of building this progressive mass movement, the Milwaukee Committee to Stop FBI Repression is hosting a community forum on July 30 at the Uni-

versity of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Room 181 of the Student Union.

The event's flyer reads, "On Sept. 24, the FBI raided the homes of prominent anti-war, immigrant rights, and international solidarity activists in Chicago and Minneapolis. Since then, 23 activists have been subpoenaed to a Grand Jury investigation and the home of prominent Chicano immigrant rights organizer Carlos Montes was raided."

"The FBI is attacking these activists because of their political activity. The U.S. government is using a 42-year-old charge from 1969 to prosecute Carlos Montes today for a weapons and ammunition charge, and four charges of perjury on his weapons permit, and his next court date is Aug. 12. Montes is facing decades in prison. The activists have chosen to fight back, uniting hundreds of labor, community, and student organizations, which all condemn this wave of FBI repression."

The public forum will feature Montes via live satellite; Tom Burke, national spokesperson for the Committee to Stop FBI Repression; Professor Ahmed Mbalia of Africans on the Move; and others. For more information, call 608-658-5480.

For information and to support the people's movement in Wisconsin, see www.defendwisconsin.org, www.vdlf.org, www.wisafclcio.org, wisafclcio.typepad.com and www.wibailoutpeople.org. □

TOP TEN

Things that 'Captain America' could do to stop some real villains

1. Having beaten off the Nazis, now square off with the Wall Street villains who are stealing everything.
2. Have a real tea party and throw the "Tea Party" leaders overboard.
3. Give that Mayor Bloomberg of New York a thorough beating for cutting everything while claiming not to.
4. Make an alliance with Captain Palestine.
5. Waterboard the Pentagon generals and war profiteers.
6. Give the criminals behind Fannie Mac and Fannie Mae a real whacking.
7. Stop the drone killer aircraft from killing any more people in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Libya, among other places.
8. Pass out those magic shields to all those fighting U.S. occupation.
9. Beat up the Republicans in front of the Democrats and say: "Why are you laughing? You're next."
10. Do to the fascist "Minute Men" along the border with Mexico what you did to the Nazis in your movie fantasy.

— Paul Wilcox

Debt-ceiling ‘crisis’ made on Wall Street

Politicians rob workers, protect the wealthy

Continued from page 1

The crisis atmosphere generated by every organ of big business propaganda — network television, cable TV, newspapers, magazines, bloggers, etc. — is a reflection of the anxiety of bankers, bondholders, insurance companies, hedge funds and other investors over the possibility of default and all its implications.

Over and over again one hears the demand for an agreement that will raise the debt ceiling, avoid default and maintain the “full faith and credit of the U.S. government.” This means, in practice, maintaining the certainty that bondholders will not miss a payment of principal or interest on their investment in U.S. government bonds.

This is the future “crisis” that the White House, the congressional leadership of the big business parties, and all the pundits of the bourgeoisie — regardless of their opinion about what to do — say must be avoided.

But there already is a crisis — a crisis of the working class. It has been going on for four years. It not only has to be avoided; it has to be reversed.

The real crisis: jobs, housing, health care, hunger

The workers and the oppressed must break free from these arguments tailored to the interests of the capitalist rich. From a working-class point of view, the debt-ceiling crisis should not be about paying the rich and cutting entitlements.

What about raising the debt ceiling to create a massive jobs program to achieve full employment? If the government is going to borrow more money, let it put the 30 million unemployed or underem-

ployed workers back to work. Better yet, don’t raise the debt ceiling and instead create jobs with the funds that otherwise would go to the banks and bondholders.

Why should our class, the working class and the exploited, worry about a millionaire or billionaire missing an interest payment when 50 million people in this country are missing meals? Why should workers be concerned that some millionaires will not be able to pay the overhead on their mansions when millions are already homeless and millions more are threatened with foreclosure?

In fact, justice demands that the profits of the bankers and other financiers be used to aid the 47 million people who are on food stamps. It should be used to give health care to the 50 million people who have none because medical care has been turned over to the profit-seeking insurance companies and pharmaceutical monopolies.

The Tea Party & the crisis

A question must be answered in the present crisis. How is it that the mainstream Wall Street financiers and the political establishment have been demanding a solution to this problem for several weeks now, yet things have come so close to the brink of default? Already the prospect of downgrading the credit rating of the U.S. government is on the agenda, regardless of whether or not there is a default.

One answer is that the Republicans will turn heaven and earth to sabotage the Obama administration in order to win the White House in 2012. But, ironically, default threatens the very bankers and bondholders who call the tune in the Republican Party.

House speaker John Boehner was responding to Wall Street when he entered into secret negotiations with President Barack Obama last week to strike a “grand bargain.” Wall Street had been satisfied up until then to use the struggle as a battering ram against Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and other spending programs. But as the Aug. 2 deadline approached, finance capital was getting anxious for a settlement.

Key elements agreed upon by Obama and Boehner included \$250 billion in cuts to Medicare and a slow increase in the eligibility age from 65 to 67. Obama agreed to \$110 billion in cuts to Medicaid and other health care programs, while Boehner wanted \$150 billion. Other domestic programs were to be cut between \$200 billion and \$214 billion. Adjustments were to be made to the Social Security formula for cost-of-living adjustments, which would lower payments.

As the two sides were coming closer together, word of the negotiations leaked out, and Boehner was forced to walk out of the negotiations and denounce them. From then on his position shifted further and further to the right, toward intransigence. The liberal wing of the Democratic Party also revolted — against the cuts — but Obama stuck by his bargain with Boehner.

To understand the collapse of the talks, it is important to remember that, of the 290 Republicans in the House, at least 141 are endorsed by the Tea Party Express or Freedom Works, a pro-Tea-Party-wing organization, or are part of the Congressional Tea Party Caucus.

These forces have been derided in the capitalist media as “childish” and “crazies.” But these characterizations conceal an important political point about U.S. capitalist politics.

These forces emerged in 2008 in the struggle against a Town Hall meeting held on the health care issue. A phony “grass-roots” movement, dubbed the “Astroturf” movement, was organized and funded by right-wing billionaires like the Koch brothers, the Bradley Foundation, the Olin Foundation and others who are at war with the political establishment in both parties and with the main stream, Wall Street section of the ruling class.

These are the forces that spit on Black Representative John Lewis and gay Congress members on the steps of the Capitol building during the 2008 election campaign. They also showed up with guns at Town Hall meetings that were called to defend health care reform. These are the forces that confronted a conservative Republican, Arlen Specter, at a Town Hall meeting in Pennsylvania and shouted him down. They eventually drove him out of bourgeois politics, even though he was a reactionary member of the establishment.

The Tea Party forces are funded by these billionaires with campaign ads, organization and staff, and were propelled into office in the 2010 elections by the ultra-right-wing of the ruling class. The Koch brothers are paying the bills for Gov. Scott Walker in Wisconsin to break the public sector unions. The Tea Party ideologues reflect the ideology of their benefactors. To this extreme right, which is outside the political establishment, default is not a danger.

When Martin Bashir of MSNBC interviewed Judson Phillips, founder of the Tea Party Nation, on July 25, Phillips blurted out the Tea Party strategy on default. He said it was not a first choice. That by Aug. 2 the federal government could avoid default by paying its debt ser-

vice to the bankers and bondholders but stop “wasteful” spending on entitlements.

In other words, by pushing the stalemate to the end, one strategy of the ultra-right Tea Party billionaires is to force the government to choose between default and paying Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and other benefits.

While this is a doubtful scenario, nevertheless it reveals what is on the minds of the ultra-right. And this is why the politics of the ruling-class parties are working at cross purposes to the broader interests of the ruling class as a whole. Dismissing Tea Party members as “crazies” in this debate is to conceal their role as a cat’s-paw of the ultra-right-wing of the ruling class. Whatever their clinical condition, they are a direct expression of ruling-class forces. And that is what is important to the working class.

The global economic crisis

Finally, whatever the outcome of this struggle, it will not eradicate the underlying crisis of the capitalist system. Representing the European ruling classes, Angela Merkel of Germany and Nicolas Sarkozy of France together with the other eurozone countries have just come to an agreement to bail out the Greek ruling class and also establish a superfund to bail out future governments and banks that are in danger of default in Europe.

This codifies a perspective of long-term crisis dictated by slow growth or actual decline in many of the capitalist countries there — including now Italy and Spain, the third- and fourth-largest economies in the eurozone.

In the U.S. the projections for growth are being marked down by the “experts.” Unemployment is rising. Layoffs are rising. State and local governments are shrinking and so are education and social services. The bonding agencies have said that up to 7,000 municipalities may have their credit ratings downgraded, meaning they will have to pay more interest to banks and investors.

The real default is capitalism’s default to society as a whole. It is destroying the environment, undermining the health and well-being of the entire population, promulgating racism, sexism and anti-lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer oppression and anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim division. It is spreading war, intervention and occupation around the globe at the cost of trillions of dollars.

The time has come to open up a struggle to fight back against a system that puts the profits of millionaires and billionaires above everything — as can be seen in the present debt-ceiling battle. An anti-capitalist struggle must be put on the agenda of the workers and the oppressed as the only way out of the present crisis. □

NEW YORK

City University votes to raise tuition

Special to Workers World

As WW goes to press, three students won a temporary restraining order against CUNY prohibiting it from raising tuition because the Board of Trustees didn’t follow proper rules in its vote. More details to come in an upcoming article.

In June, as part of the budget deal worked out by the Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo, the state legislature passed a bill allowing City University of New York and State University of New York to raise their tuition by \$300 a year for the next 5 years. These hikes, which really should be considered a new education tax, will affect over 600,000 students, the vast majority of which are the daughters, sons or members of the working class.

CUNY had already raised its tuition by 10 percent in the 2009-10 school year.

Because of its charter, CUNY’s Board of Trustees had to implement the tuition hike that the legislature authorized. It held a public comment session July 20 on

its resolution to raise tuition before an executive session July 21.

Even though these hearings were held in the middle of the summer in the midst of a heat wave, with many students and faculty members gone, there were still protests.

New York City Council member Charles Barron denounced the raise in a fiery speech that ignored the BoT’s three-minute limit.

Anthony Gronowicz, an adjunct faculty member at Manhattan Community College and a Green Party activist, pointed out “Tuition is a tax that did not exist in City University from 1847 through 1975. When CUNY was free for those 128 years, it provided an avenue for many, including our esteemed Chancellor, [Matthew Goldstein-WW] to advance themselves. Continuing to raise tuition for our students, some of whom have to choose between a Metro card and lunch, is to deny them the opportunity for a higher education.” (Professional Staff Congress list serve) □

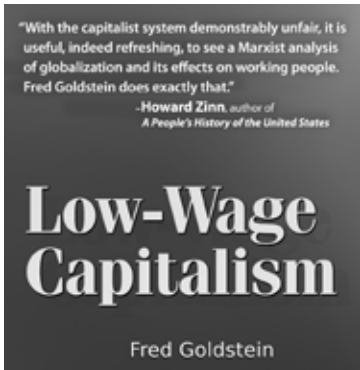
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The real scandal behind the Murdoch empire

By Deirdre Griswold

The scandal at Rupert Murdoch’s News of the World won’t make the giant media monopolies any less mouthpieces for the billionaire ruling class.

Heads will roll — they already have. That’s why executives get paid so well. They do the dirty work for the real owners of capital and sometimes get caught. Then it’s off with their heads and another high-paid flunky gets the job.

For example, Les Hinton, publisher of the Wall Street Journal, and Rebekah Brooks, head of Murdoch’s British papers, have been forced to resign, and Brooks has been arrested, but the global Murdoch media empire goes on.

Murdoch’s News Corp. owns not only tabloids like London’s News of the World (which just closed down), the Sun (London) and the New York Post, but also the staid Times of London, the Wall Street Journal, Barron’s, Dow Jones & Co., Far Eastern Economic Review, Fox television channels all over the world, the National Geographic channel, 20th Century Fox, HarperCollins publishers, plus literally hundreds of other newspapers and news, entertainment and business outlets.

Murdoch’s right-wing politics reek in all of them — in some more openly and crudely, in others more subdued. The question is, why were his lying flunkies outed this time? How come Murdoch didn’t have enough influence to cover it all up, as he undoubtedly has done before?

Is this huge scandal really over the

greedy and crass behavior of his employees who, looking for juicy news copy, hacked the cellphone of an abducted teenager and then deleted messages from her voicemail, thus giving her parents false hope that the girl was still alive? This seemed to be the issue when the scandal first broke, but many other revelations followed that compromised British politicians and police officials.

There are probably several answers to the question of why the scandal has escalated. They can be boiled down to this: Murdoch has lots of money but he also has made lots of enemies in his own class of arrogant capitalists. One who tries to corner the world market, whether it’s in news or in oil, has to sink a lot of competitors. Murdoch was trying to take over Britain’s most lucrative satellite television company when the scandal broke.

Bow down to royalty

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, in the Communist Manifesto, described the executive branch of a capitalist government as “a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” When the consensus among the bourgeoisie is that one of their own has overreached himself and wants to take the whole pie, they expect the state to step in.

What made Murdoch vulnerable? For one thing, his minions had bribed security guards for Britain’s royal family to sell them the royals’ private phone numbers so their conversations could be hacked to produce titillating stories for his tabloids.

The bourgeoisie in Britain like having a monarchy that is considered sacrosanct. Hundreds of years ago, when they were struggling for political power, the burghers may have wanted a republic without all the expensive trappings of majesty, but those days are long gone. The royal family became a symbol of the British Empire and an untouchable buffer between the masses and the real ruling class — the capitalist oligarchs.

Thus, they consider the Murdoch machine’s trifling with royalty a danger to the supposed dignity of the entire ruling establishment. Disrespect and outright disdain for royalty is rife among the masses, especially the youth. But the bourgeoisie see Murdoch as a traitor for capitalizing on this.

The resignation of the two highest-ranking officials of Scotland Yard was another sign that the credibility of the capitalist state itself had been endangered by the Murdoch gang, whose deep pockets let them flout the law with impunity.

This is a time when the ruling class relies on the state to force austerity on the masses. The same kinds of cutbacks and layoffs in the public sector that are starting to roil workers in the U.S. have been shoved down the workers’ throats in Britain, despite huge demonstrations and the first general strike in decades. The bourgeoisie and their politicians need to clean up the image of the state.

Murdoch takeover bid fails

Another element that undoubtedly fed

the desire to bring Murdoch down a peg or two was News Corp.’s attempt to take over British Sky Broadcasting, the country’s most lucrative satellite television network. It has more than 10 million paying subscribers, representing 36 percent of all the households in both Britain and Ireland. The government’s business secretary boasted he had “declared war” on Murdoch and would find a convenient legal excuse to block his takeover bid. (New York Times, July 23)

News Corp. already owned 39 percent of BSkyB. James Murdoch, son of Rupert, was made CEO of BSkyB in 2003. Four years later, despite shareholder objections, he was moved up to become “non-executive chairman,” replacing his father. Since the phone-hacking scandal went viral, News Corp.’s takeover bid has collapsed.

Don’t expect that all this means that the Murdoch media empire is finished, or that it will tone down its racist, anti-immigrant, misogynist content. A struggle within the ruling class can get messy, but the real big shots seldom go to jail or even have to pay more than pin money for their crimes. Besides, even the most genteel of capitalists need an unscrupulous media that doesn’t hesitate to dish out right-wing sensationalism to the public, especially in times of economic crisis.

The real scandal is that billionaires control and manipulate what the people read and view every day.

Email: dgriswold@workers.org

A deadly crime of capitalism

Rising food prices & forced migration

By Heather Cottin

“Food is a right” is not just a slogan. In 1999 the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights determined that food is actually a human right. But the price of food has doubled worldwide since 2000, according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization.

The FAO publishes a monthly food price index. June 2011 figures show that food prices are 39 percent higher than in June 2010. (Business Insider, July 7) The right to eat is under attack.

The food profiteers claim that the law of supply and demand has caused the spike in food prices. Not enough supply, they claim. But world food production is greater than ever. Corn production has increased. Rice production is up 3 per-

cent. (agropages.com, May 11) This year wheat crops promise to surpass records. (Delta Farm Press, July 15)

Some capitalist apologists say that the price of wheat went up because of a bad harvest in Russia in 2010, which made the Russian government withhold wheat from the world market. In fact, the Swiss commodities firm Glencore forced the Russian government, which had sufficient wheat reserves, to impose a ban on exports. Glencore made a killing in the futures market. Wheat prices have increased by 70 percent since January 2010. But there was neither a shortfall in production nor any appreciable rise in demand. (Sri Lanka Daily News, April 23)

Corn is the mainstay of the Latin American and sub-Saharan African diets. Global corn production is up. So are

corn prices. The U.S. produces almost 40 percent of the global corn supply. But this corn is not going to nourish people. It is feeding cars and industries.

The ethanol fuel industry now uses around 40 percent of corn produced in the U.S., up from around 7 percent a decade ago. (Business Insider, July 7) In the United States over the last five years, 100 percent of the increase in corn production has been for use in making ethanol fuel. (Domestic Fuel, July 18) The Obama administration has been promoting bio-fuels while speculators have driven up the price of corn futures by 82 percent. (bloomberg.com, June 21)

Forced migration & small farmers

Agribusiness and “free trade” policies over the past 30 years forced farmers off their lands from Latin America to Africa, from Iowa to Ireland. Migration from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean was the result of policies of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the main driving force for promoting an industrial takeover of global agriculture. (Sri Lanka Daily News, April 23)

Poor family farmers could not compete when companies like Archer Daniels Midland, BASF, Bunge Ltd, Cargill, Coca-Cola, DuPont, General Mills, Kraft Foods, Metro AG, Monsanto, Nestle PepsiCo, SABMiller or Syngenta flooded the world market with low-priced grains. When the small farmers went out of business, the food giants bought up their land cheaply, and began to industrialize agriculture.

In Mexico and Central America, small farmers had their fields, growing corn and beans to feed their families. But beginning in the 1980s, they could no longer

sell their surpluses, since agribusinesses had forced down the price of corn. The farmers, now displaced people, unsuccessfully sought work in the cities. Then they became forced migrants, seeking economic refuge in the United States.

African farmers suffered the same fate and ended up in Europe. Land formerly feeding people became coffee plantations and agribusiness started up flower production, while some companies in South America, Asia and Africa grew “upscale” fruits and vegetables for European and North American markets.

It was a standard capitalist trick. Drive down prices to drive people out of business, and then raise prices to clean up huge profits. It has impoverished family farmers since the beginning of capitalism, but it has never been so global in its virulence.

Rising food prices have sparked protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Malawi, Kenya, India, Bangladesh and a dozen other countries. Food prices have created greater poverty and hunger.

In Yemen, the price of bread has increased by 50 percent; flour, sugar and milk prices have risen between 40 percent and 60 percent, and the same is true for water. UNICEF finds 60 percent of Yemeni children affected by malnutrition, a figure that is higher than that found in sub-Saharan Africa. A quarter of the people in Yemen live on one meal a day. (english.alarabiya.net, July 25)

Increases in food prices are creating hunger and famines that have nothing to do with drought or food shortages. This deadly situation is leading to more peoples’ resistance to governments that sit by while corporations profit and people starve. □

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Int’l Women’s Alliance holds First General Assembly

PHILIPPINES

**Special to Workers World
Quezon City, Philippines**

The International Women’s Assembly successfully held its First General Assembly on July 5 and 6 in Quezon City, Philippines, under the theme “Advance the Global Anti-imperialist Women’s Movement! Strengthen the International Women’s Alliance!”

The FGA, hosted by GABRIELA Philippines, was attended by 99 delegates representing 66 organizations in 20 countries: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Ecuador, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Kurdistan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, The Netherlands and the United States.

On the morning of July 5, participants at the IWA FGA joined hundreds of individuals from all over the world at the opening of the International Festival of Peoples’ Rights and Struggles, a space for workers, peasants, women, migrants, Indigenous peoples, youth, artists and many other sectors from around the globe to learn, share and interact with one another on the issues and challenges they confront. A video greeting was given by Dr. José Maria Sison, chairperson of the International League for Peoples’ Struggle.

As co-sponsor of this event, the IWA organized a panel of grass-roots, gender experts composed of Azra Talat Sayeed of Pakistan, who talked about the struggle of oppressed women and people against imperialist attacks and terror in Pakistan, and Lina Solano of Ecuador, who discussed women’s resistance against foreign mining corporations in Latin America. The speech of keynote speaker Leila Khaled from the General Union of Palestinian Women — who was unable to come due to a family emergency — was read by Liza Maza of GABRIELA-Philippines.

The organizational meeting of the IWA began later the same day, with participants performing a ritual of unity led by GABRIELA’s cultural group Sining Lila (Purple Art).

Liza Maza, of the IWA FGA Organizing Committee, delivered opening remarks. She noted that the FGA continues the pro-

cess started in 2008 when the Women’s Commission of the ILPS unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the formation of an anti-imperialist global alliance of women. The call was realized when the founding assembly of IWA was held last Aug. 16 following a two-day Montreal International Women’s Conference in Canada.

Maza stressed that the Alliance was formed as an anti-imperialist, anti-patriarchy, anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-homophobic alliance to organize women as a political force and to link the women’s movement with the people’s movement for national and social liberation and gender equality.

The Organizing Committee presiding over the plenary approved the agenda of the FGA and of the applications of 30 new members, which makes nearly 100 IWA organizational members to date.

Reports for the Women’s Resistance Against Imperialism panel were presented by Sarojeni Rengam, of the Asian Rural Women’s Coalition and Pesticide Action Network Asia-Pacific (Malaysia) for Asia; Clelia Iscaro, of the National Encounters of Women (Argentina) for Latin America; Emime Ndihekubwayo, of Kenya for Africa; Daphna Whitmore, of the Auckland Philippines Solidarity (Australia) for Oceania; Monica Moorehead, of the Women’s Fightback Network (U.S.) and Kelti Cameron, of the Ontario Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines (Canada) for North America; and Monika Gaertner-Engel, of the Women’s Political Caucus (Germany) for Europe.

The panel of speakers coming from different regions across the globe spoke on the intensifying imperialist attacks on women’s lives and livelihood, and shared their strategies of resistance and the need to unite in the struggle against imperialism and all reaction.

Preparing for struggles ahead

The assembly deliberated on and adopted the Manila Declaration of Unity of the International Women’s Alliance that called for a global, militant, anti-imperialist women’s movement that will “link ourselves and our struggles to fight our common enemy — imperialism and feudalism



Gabriela youth leader Kenette Jean Millondaga and Monica Moorehead at International Women’s Alliance First General Assembly in Philippines, July 6.

PHOTO:
RAYA MARTIN

including patriarchy — and to stop the economic and political domination of the capitalist system, and to end imperialist wars of aggression and measures against the oppressed peoples of the world.”

The IWA Constitution was also discussed and adopted by the assembly.

Workshops by global regions were held to deliberate on the draft General Program of Action of the Alliance and to draw up its Four-Year Plan of Action based on the major issues in the context of the regions.

The plenary then approved by acclamation the GPOA, the Four-Year Plan and resolutions on particular issues and concerns the Alliance will work on. The action plan includes the work of projecting IWA’s analysis and positions on major issues affecting the majority of the world’s women and oppressed peoples, building IWA regional chapters and encouraging young women to join IWA among others.

The Assembly elected members of the Executive Council, with their responsibilities noted: Chairperson Liza Maza; Vice-Chairperson for Internal Affairs Azra Talat Sayeed (Roots for Equity); Vice Chairperson for External Affairs Lina Solano (Women Defenders of Mother Earth); Secretary General Marie Boti (Women of Diverse Origins, Canada); Deputy Secretary General Maitet Ledesma (Filipinas in Holland, the Netherlands); Treasurer Retno Dewi (Alliance of Agrarian Reform

Movement, Indonesia); Auditor Daphna Whitmore; and members Lana Linaban (GABRIELA, Philippines) and Monica Moorehead (WFN).

The EC assigned Valerie Francisco of the U.S. — who had energetically facilitated the two-day FGA — to lead the development of a platform for participation of young women in the IWA.

In the closing ceremony, the participants recognized and honored four Women of Valor — Edith Ballantyne, of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (Canada); Leila Khaled; Carmen “Nanay Mameng” Deunida of Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Philippines); and Carmela Iscaro of National Encounters of Women (Argentina). These courageous women were recognized for their “steadfast commitment and invaluable contribution to the promotion of women’s emancipation, freedom, peace and social liberation.” Each honoree received a plaque in the shape of the IWA logo.

Singing songs of struggles and shouting slogans, Assembly participants linked arms, forming a large circle symbolizing great unity and strong resolve to carry the struggle forward in the 21st century.

For updates on the IWA FGA, including the upcoming Manila Declaration of Unity, go to internationalwomensalliance.wordpress.com.

Next: An exposure tour in a Manila urban area.

58 years after war’s end, Koreans remain vigilant

By Deirdre Griswold

The U.S. government has carried out so many wars and invasions since World War II that just listing them all would take a whole page. Most people living in the U.S. have only a vague idea of the terrible damage this imperialist government has inflicted on the world — always in the name of peace and democracy.

This July 27, the Korean people are commemorating the end of one of those wars. Those who live in the north, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, cannot forget that date. As a fact sheet put out by the DPRK says, “The memory of the war, even after nearly 60 years, still lives in the minds of the people.”

In the northern and southern parts of the Korean peninsula, old and young will mourn the millions who were killed in a war that lasted three years, from 1950 to 1953. In the north, which had liberated itself in 1945 from Japanese colonial rule,

the struggle against a new oppressor — the U.S. — will be the dominant theme. People will talk about the huge amount of firepower the Pentagon expended trying to bring about the surrender of the revolutionary communist government there.

The DPRK fact sheet says that the U.S. “hurled into the Korean war a huge force of armed troops over 2 million strong, including one-third of its ground force, one-fifth of its air force, and the most part of its Pacific Fleet, and the troops of its 15 vassal states, south Korea and even the remnants of the former Japanese army. It also squandered over 73 million tons of war materiel, 11 times greater than that it had consumed in the four years of the Pacific War.”

The destruction that so much weaponry and armed forces did is almost inconceivable. U.S. pilots toward the end of the war reported they could find no more targets to bomb — they had destroyed every building over one story, every bridge, every fac-

tory. Yet the Korean people continued to resist, living in caves and underground, and eventually repelled the invasion.

On July 27, 1953, the U.S. signed an armistice and withdrew its troops south of the 38th parallel — where they had been before the war started. U.S. occupation troops have been in the south ever since, dividing the Korean people into two separate states.

A people organized will never give up

We live in a time when Washington is carrying out at least three open wars and many more covert ones that employ pilotless drone planes, Special Forces and mercenaries. Imperialism has not changed its spots. The super-rich ruling class of the U.S. is not content with making huge profits off the labor of workers here. It needs to grab resources and exploit the people all over the world or this insatiable system breaks down.

The leaders of the DPRK know this. They have no illusions about imperialism. At the same time, they have confidence in

the determination of the Korean people to never let the imperialists do again to Korea what they did before and are doing today to countries like Libya, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Korean statement points out that it was in Korea that the U.S. imperialists met their first defeat ever. They could not break the people or their leaders. The casualties the U.S. sustained in that war, as they made young draftees fight for their empire, were greater than in any war since.

Just like the Vietnam War more than a decade later, the war in Korea showed that an organized people defending their homeland and their social system against a predatory invasion force will never give up.

As the Korean people commemorate the armistice signed on July 27, 1953, they also continue to stay strong militarily and remain vigilant so that one day the U.S. government will have to sign a peace treaty with the DPRK and end the state of war that has kept Korea divided for so long. □

WW
Commentary

WikiLeaks reveals new details of U.S. intervention in Haiti

By G. Dunkel

The transparency-advocacy group WikiLeaks has released secret cables dating from 2003 to 2010 that reveal details of Washington’s intervention in Haiti. Published in the weekly newspaper *Haiti Liberté*, the cables are having a powerful impact on Haitian politics.

But U.S. intervention didn’t start in 2003. Ever since Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson gave the slave owners in Haiti \$700,000 in an abortive attempt to put down the slave revolution that ultimately crushed them — the U.S.’s first foreign aid and a major amount of money at the time — the U.S. government has been engaged in Haiti.

From 1804 to 1862 the U.S. enforced a diplomatic and trade embargo against Haiti. From 1915 to 1934 a U.S. military occupation tried to mold Haiti into a profitable neo-colony.

As popular resistance to occupation grew stronger, the U.S. withdrew and shifted its support from 1957 to 1986 to the fascist Duvaliers, father and son, and their Tonton Macoutes paramilitaries, although it distanced itself from their harsh, unprofitable repression toward the end.

After suffering from years of bloody military coups, massacres of protesters — hundreds of peasants demanding land were killed at Jean-Rabel in 1987 — and

elections drowned in blood, the Haitian people elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide by a landslide in 1990. Aristide called the mass movement that put him into power Lavalas, the Creole word for “torrent.”

In 1991 a U.S.-backed military coup deposed Aristide as president. Later he returned to Haiti after a 1994 U.S. invasion. Washington then let the United Nations take responsibility for the occupation. René Préval replaced Aristide in 1996, and Aristide was re-elected president in 2000, replacing Préval in 2001.

Because Aristide disbanded the army in 1995, it took until Feb. 29, 2004, for U.S. imperialism and its allies in the reactionary Haitian bourgeoisie to organize a coup. That day U.S. Special Forces kidnapped Aristide and his spouse, Mildred Trouillot Aristide, putting them on a U.S. Air Force jet and flying them to the Central African Republic.

A delegation, which included Johnnie Stevens from the Peoples Video Network and Sara Flounders from the International Action Center; Kim Ives, now an editor with *Haiti Liberté*; plus Aristide’s attorney Brian Concannon and filmmaker Katherine Kean, was the first to visit Aristide in the Central African Republic on March 9, 2004, and reveal to the world the nature of the U.S. kidnapping.

U.N. armed forces called Minustah took over from the U.S. and French troops occu-

pying Haiti in June 2004 and are still there.

WikiLeaks supplies the details

While what Washington has done in Haiti is in the historical record, as well as some of its deliberations and the political analysis of its diplomats and soldiers, a lot occurred behind closed doors, and the details had not been publicly accessible until now.

WikiLeaks has 1,918 secret diplomatic cables about Haiti from U.S. embassies, covering from April 17, 2003, 10 months before the Feb. 29 coup d’état, to Feb. 28, 2010, just after the Jan. 12 earthquake that devastated the capital of Port-au-Prince and the surrounding area. WikiLeaks asked *Haiti Liberté* to publish selections from them in French and Creole and to cooperate with The Nation on the English versions.

“*Haiti Liberté* is publishing these cables because they offer unparalleled insight into how the United States government has tried to manipulate Haitian affairs in its own interests, not in the interests of the Haitian people,” said Berthony Dupont, *Haiti Liberté*’s director. “We hope that the release of the cables will help bring about some transparency and accountability for the Haitian people.”

The revelations from WikiLeaks broke through in even the most right-wing media in Haiti like *Le Nouvelliste*. In a signed

editorial in the July 13-19 issue of *Haiti Liberté*, Dupont makes the following point: “Recently, the striking impact of WikiLeaks has made the Haitian bourgeoisie tremble in their boots, and revealed its disgraceful, hidden character: its scornful cowardice and its shameful lack of courage.”

This class has done everything the imperialists told it to do and showed no concern for the development of Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Workers World asked Ives, a writer of many of the *Haiti Liberté* articles and a member of its editorial board, why the United States devoted so much effort to controlling and manipulating such a small, poor country.

Ives said Haiti is “the second most populous nation in the Caribbean. It is one of the principal battle lines in the struggle Washington is waging against the ALBA nations, led by Cuba and Venezuela, and also in the struggle between China and Taiwan. So North-South and East-West geopolitics all converge there, especially because Haiti is the only militarily occupied nation in the Americas.”

Haiti also has a 200-year history of resistance and success against great odds. For all that the United States and its allies did to keep President Aristide in exile — detailed in one of the *Haiti Liberté* articles — after seven years of struggle, he is back in Haiti. □

NORWAY COMMENTARY

Terrorist aimed to mobilize racism Multinational working-class unity can combat it

Continued from page 1

alone a Christian terrorist; he was instead labeled a “psychopath,” which removes political responsibility.

By now nearly everyone knows that 32-year-old Anders Behring Breivik, a self-proclaimed Christian and anti-Muslim, has admitted killing 76 people and wounding more than 100 on July 22. They know too that he did this as a political statement of hate for Islam and for “multiculturalism” and for anything resembling Marxism or workers’ solidarity.

Like the Arizona shooter Jared Loughner, Breivik’s terrorist act grew out of the racist and anti-immigrant politics that are the central organizing tools of ultra-right organizations in Europe like the National Front in France and the Northern League in Italy — and the Tea Party in the United States, which is the home office of racism.

In Norway the party of this type is

the Progressive Party, to which Breivik belonged until 2006. This fascist-style ideology has been adopted — in a barely milder form — by mainstream capitalist politicians in Europe and North America.

Rather than combating racist ideology and right-wing fallacies, the mainstream capitalist parties and the corporate-owned media help the ultra-right create a political atmosphere poisoned by the worst sort of racism and anti-immigrant, anti-foreign, especially anti-Muslim, attitudes. The Times, the BBC and the capitalists do nothing to encourage multinational solidarity, especially among the working class. Thus they help create the septic mix that nurtures a killer like Breivik.

Unlike Loughner, Breivik left a 1,500-page manifesto documenting his plans and revealing his close ties with racist U.S. bloggers and anti-Muslim ideology. A New York Times article on July 25 ex-

posed the role of U.S.-based ultra-rightists in Breivik’s development. There are 64 references in this document to Robert Spencer, who operates the U.S.-based “Jihad Watch” website, and that’s just one example.

Look behind these developments and you find the severe capitalist economic crisis. Its first victims were the oppressed countries, the former colonies. Workers and farmers trying to survive made their way at great cost to Europe and the United States to find work, and for years many did find work.

Now the crisis is hitting home in the imperialist countries. There is high unemployment overall. What is the solution for workers and oppressed communities?

Breivik’s ideological fellow-thinkers — including those like Glenn Beck, whose first reaction to the massacre was to attack Norway’s Labor Party — propose ratchet-

ing up racism and expelling immigrants.

These “solutions” keep the working class divided and fighting each other for the steadily dwindling pool of jobs. The capitalists are just fine with that.

Like the Times and the BBC, the mainstream capitalist parties refuse to stand firm against this racism, as the capitalists don’t want to promote solidarity. They profit from keeping workers divided.

The only alternative is for the working class itself to develop and strengthen solidarity and unity among all workers, the unemployed, and those from oppressed nations — and to realize that our enemy is the wealthy capitalist class, not each other.

The racist, divisive aims and acts of anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant neo-fascists can be stopped if workers, whether they are born in a country or immigrants, join together to struggle for jobs and for an end to the nightmare of capitalism worldwide. □

HAITI: A Slave Revolution

200 Years after 1804

Updated 2010: Includes the coup against President Aristide and the January 2010 earthquake.

Drawing from a wide range of authors, experts, and historical texts, this collection challenges 200 years of cultural myths and disinformation. These essays explain the background to the current crisis in Haiti, the untold stories of the Haitian people’s resistance to U.S. aggression and occupations.

Authors include: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Ramsey Clark, Pat Chin, Edwidge Danticat, Frederick Douglass, Greg Dunkel, Ben Dupuy, Sara Flounders, Stan Goff, Kim Ives, Fleurimond Kerns, Paul Laraque, Maud LeBlanc, Sam Marcy, Franz Mendes & Steve Gillis, Felix Morriseau-Leroy, Johnnie Stevens, Abayomi Azikiwe, Larry Hales, Monica Moorehead, Saeed Shabazz. Included are a time line, photo essay, author biographies, and bibliography.

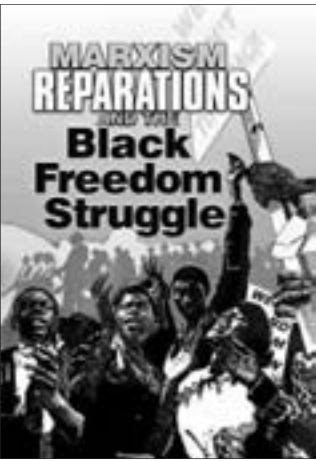
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Imperialists — hands off Syria!

U.S. and French imperialism have flagrantly intervened in the Syrian crisis and made it obvious that they will act to overthrow and replace President Bashir Assad. This is an open threat to the people of Syria. It is a clear signal that progressive forces in the U.S. must give priority to combating this imperialist intervention no matter how they evaluate the Assad government.

Nothing could be more harmful to the people of Syria than the intervention of the U.S., France and other imperialist powers or NATO-member Turkey. Anywhere in the world imperialism steps in it brings death, suffering, political reaction and increased oppression of the peoples involved.

That is the lesson of Iraq. It is the lesson of Afghanistan. It is the lesson of the ongoing and completely illegitimate NATO war on Libya. It was also the lesson earlier of Korea and Vietnam, and of Central America in the 1980s.

Nine years of occupation of Iraq have killed more than a million Iraqis, injured hundreds of thousands and displaced more than 4 million externally and internally. It has destroyed the Iraqi infrastructure and torn Iraqi society apart. It has left the residues of the war machine, from phosphorus to depleted uranium, to poison Iraqis for generations, just as it left Agent Orange in Vietnam. It has left 6 million illiterate in a country that in the 1970s led the region in literacy.

Ten years of U.S./NATO occupation of Afghanistan has brought the systematic slaughter of Afghan civilians. The puppet government barely rules Kabul and relies on the most reactionary warlords — both Afghan and NATO — in its pretense of administering Afghan society.

The imperialists and their media sold these wars as bringing “freedom” from Saddam Hussein in Iraq and from the Taliban in Afghanistan, but no one has gained in freedom, and only the most corrupt elements have grown richer.

Meanwhile the imperialist banks and corporations have gained a foothold in both countries like they never were able to obtain before these costly wars.

Back in Syria, on July 8 the ambassadors of the two imperialist countries — the military superpower and the former colonial power in Syria — went to the city of Hama about 140 miles north of Damascus to take part in a protest against the Assad government. Hama was the center of the Muslim Brotherhood that was the major opponent of the earlier government of Hafez al-Assad, father of the current president. This is flagrant imperialist interference in — Syrian affairs.

Adding to this arrogance are the statements of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and President Barack Obama that the Assad government has lost “legitimacy.” Only the Syrian people can decide this. The criminal regime in Washington has no moral weight — its only and unfortunately still enormous weight rests on the destructive power of the Pentagon and the dollar. Whomever Washington speaks against, gains credibility.

Only the people of Syria have the right to determine who commands the Syrian state. The role of progressive people and organizations in the imperialist countries is to work and fight to keep the U.S., France, the European Union and NATO member Turkey from butting into Syrian affairs.

Imperialists, hands off Syria! □

How Wall Street banks impoverished Egypt’s small farmers

By Joyce Chediak
Cairo, Egypt

More than 85 percent of Egypt’s poor live in rural areas. Like all Egyptians, they are participating in the protests held throughout the country, and are expecting that a new Egyptian government will meet their urgent needs.

Farming communities were not always so poor. They suffer because the regime of former President Hosni Mubarak caved into the demands of Wall Street banks.

In 1991, Egypt signed an agreement with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to privatize the public sector. This process of selling off nationalized industries and inviting the biggest and most predatory foreign banks to make “structural adjustments” to the

Egyptian economy was vastly accelerated in 2004.

Public factories were privatized and parts were sold to cronies of then-President Mubarak at discounted prices. Markets were opened to exploitation by foreign companies. Meanwhile, the cost of necessities like bread and cooking oil skyrocketed, while both the standard of living and working conditions in Egypt plunged.

This was especially devastating for the countryside, where farming communities relied on government subsidies to guarantee the economic viability of their fields. These crucial subsidies for small farmers were discontinued and agribusiness was subsidized instead.

Saad Taweed, an engineer and a founder of the Egyptian Socialist Party, ex-

WW interview

Egyptian pensioners organize union

By Joyce Chediak

In addition to the mass protests in Egypt, another arena for demanding rights and fighting corruption has been Egypt’s independent trade union movement. This movement expressed its solidarity with the demonstrators, and added its clout to the struggle to bring down Hosni Mubarak five months ago.

Egypt’s independent trade unions joined together into a confederation on Jan. 30. Despite the outlawing of strikes by the ruling military regime in March, this union movement continues to grow. For example, while this reporter was in Cairo in June, the pilots of the national airline, Egypt Air, formed an independent union to fight for workers’ rights and also to target graft and corruption in the airline.

This reporter interviewed Shoukry Azer, a 74-year-old retired physician and a founder of the recently-created independent Union of Egyptian Pensioners. Its membership is Egyptians 60 years of age and older who receive government pensions. Azer has also fought against privatizing the social security and health insurance systems.

Azer explained that it was necessary to form the union because the Egyptian government “has taken 435 billion Egyptian pounds (\$73 billion) from pensioners over the last 30 years.” Mubarak did this openly and blatantly, by “refusing to continue the Ministry of Pension,” Azer said, and by moving the pension money into the treasury of the Ministry of Finance. Azer called this move “unconstitutional.” The end result is that Egyptian pensioners are being short-changed by \$73 billion of much-needed money.



WW PHOTO: JOYCE CHEDIAC

Shoukry Azer

A person used to die in Egypt before they retired at 60 years or soon after. But that is no longer the case. Life expectancy is now over 72 years. In Egypt, the elderly are the fastest growing segment of the population, according to Egypt Today. (Nov. 16, 2009) In 1986, 5 percent of Egyptians were age 60 and older. In 2015 they’ll make up 11 percent of the population and in 2050, over one-fifth.

Additionally, as of June 2008, 84 percent of all seniors 60 years and older had dependents, usually supporting between two and four people, including themselves, according to Egypt Today. Many of these dependents are unemployed adult children. For these people, the pension system, which pays retirees 60 to 600 Egyptian pounds or LE (\$10 to \$100) a month, is their only source of funds.

This reliance of many on senior parents as their only source of support is a direct result of neo-liberal economic policies imposed on Egypt by the Wall Street banks. When the International Monetary Fund and World Bank’s “structural adjustment” of the Egyptian economy began in 1991, 20 percent of the population was living on less than \$2 a day (inflation-adjusted); today, that figure is 44 percent, according to the World Bank.

Mubarak “took the money of the pensions-of 27 million people working in the public and private sector and paying into a pension. If everyone has three relatives to support, you can see what a significant number of people this is,” said Azer. “These people were cheated out of their pension money. They should get their money from the government pension fund, collected from them while they were younger.”

Azer’s union has two demands: They want their pension money back and they want the Ministry of Pension restored. The union, only a few months old, already has 400 members in Cairo and 200 in Upper Egypt, according to Azer. They also have attorneys pursuing their rights.

Azer explained, “Out of 4 million Egyptians over the age of 60 eligible for pensions, almost none get more than LE 300 (\$50), and 1.35 million get less than LE 150 (\$25), which means they take less than \$1 per day, below the poverty line.”

To collect that tiny but vitally needed \$25 per month, Egyptians aged 60 and above must stand in line for hours, often at more than one office.

Chediak spoke at the founding meeting of the Egyptian Socialist Party in Cairo June 18.



Tahrir Square protests before Mubarak’s ouster.

plained, “Fertilizer and insecticide that farmers used came from cooperatives. Now they come through commercial companies with U.S. and international companies being the dominant ones. This has lead to a doubling of the price.

“The cooperatives used to extend the insecticide and fertilizer to the farmers as a loan and the farmers would pay this back at the end of the season when they were paid for their crops. Now a commercial bank extends the loans at high interest rates,” stated Taweed.

“Rent for land tilled by small farmers was kept low by law. Since 1992, however,” he said, “all rented lands were taken back by the owners, who are mostly absentee landlords living in town.

“Rent has gone up 50 times since then, so some farmers, instead of renting for one year, can only rent the land for one crop.”

Taweed called this impoverishment of Egypt’s small farmers “the work of USAID and the World Bank, privatizing and making open market prices for everything.” □



GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

A book of articles from WW, edited by Joyce Chediak

The compelling story of how Gazans withstood blockade and bombardment only to stand tall, refusing to give up the right to determine their own lives and to choose their own government; how Gaza’s courage inspired a worldwide solidarity movement determined to break the blockade and deliver aid; exposes the forces behind the punishment of Gaza, and how a growing people’s media is breaking the mainstream media’s information blockade on this event.

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Libya war exposes U.S./NATO crimes against humanity

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

For almost five months, the combined military forces of the United States and NATO have pounded Libyan cities, towns, villages and ports in an effort to overthrow the government of Moammar Gadhafi.

These bombing operations, now numbering more than 16,000 sorties and 6,100 strikes, have been combined with a naval blockade that includes 17 warships. NATO warships in the Mediterranean have hailed 1,907 vessels, boarded 183 and diverted nine. (Reuters, July 24)

Repeatedly the Pentagon and NATO have claimed that the war on the North African nation of Libya is designed to “protect” civilians from the government in Tripoli, which, in reality, is fighting to crush an imperialist-backed insurgency. Yet many reports indicate that the war, which was launched by the U.S. and several western European countries on March 19, is a systematic campaign to terrorize and subjugate the Libyan people.

On July 25 NATO forces bombed a hospital in the western city of Zlitan, killing seven people, including three physicians. (Associated Press, July 25) Air assaults damaged food warehouses in that city.

Just hours prior to the bombings in Zlitan, NATO carried out a series of air raids on the capital of Tripoli. Bombs hit a government compound, which NATO claimed was a command and control center for the Libyan military.

British military forces took credit for the July 25 air strikes on Tripoli. Major General Nick Pope, the defense staff’s chief communications officer, stated that the Royal Air Force struck the perimeter walls of the Bab al-Aziziyah complex, which has been described as a headquarters for Libyan leader Gadhafi. However, no casualties were reported in that strike on Tripoli.

On July 24 NATO bombed what it described as a military storage facility near the oil port town of al-Brega, a tank and multiple rocket launchers near Gharyan, and a surface-to-air missile launcher and tank in Tripoli. NATO forces also hit other cities and towns, including Waddan and Zintan, where they claimed to have struck military targets.

Contrary to NATO claims, the Libyan government said that a water storage facility was hit in al-Brega killing six security guards. Additional casualties were reported when groups fighting for the Transitional National Council suffered at least 50 deaths when they attempted to attack areas around al-Brega and Misrata during the week of July 18.

Amid the bombing escalations, the

Pentagon and NATO have requested additional predator drones to carry out further strikes against Libya. President Barack Obama is considering the deployment of more of these weapons, which have been operational in this North African state for several months.

The Los Angeles Times quoted a NATO officer who said, “It’s getting more difficult to find stuff to blow up. Predators really enable you to study things and to develop a picture of what is going on.” (July 21)

He indicated that in order to deploy more drones in Libya it would be necessary to transfer them from existing theaters of war in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as other so-called “counter-terrorism” operations around the world. An unnamed Pentagon official allegedly said, “We are looking at all the possibilities. The reason why this is hard is that everything we have is currently committed elsewhere.”

Although piloted aircraft from the U.S., France, Britain and other NATO countries have carried out most of the bombing operations, Washington’s predator drones have launched 64 strikes against Libya since April.

Libyan war follows similar pattern

The Pentagon and NATO war against Libya is by no means isolated. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, the U.S./NATO war has escalated over the last two years since the Obama administration took power.

In December 2009 Obama announced the deployment of an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan. While the war has spread to neighboring Pakistan, civilian deaths from drone attacks have accelerated and consequently worsened relations between Islamabad and Washington.

Special to Workers World Atlanta

The historic Shrine of the Black Madonna in Atlanta’s West End community was the venue for a packed house on July 24. More than 500 people were eager to hear the truth about the U.S./NATO war on Libya from former Georgia Rep. Cynthia McKinney and other members of the Dignity Delegation.

McKinney led a group to Libya in early June where they were eyewitnesses to the devastation of bombings in Tripoli and civilian casualties.

The meeting was organized by a broad coalition including the World African Diaspora Union (Georgia), the Nation of Islam, All-African Peoples Revolutionary Party (Georgia), the African Community Cen-

Since the beginning of the U.S. and allied states’ invasion and occupation of Iraq, there have been large-scale Iraqi deaths. The war’s pretexts were unjustified since the Iraqi government under Saddam Hussein and the Arab Baath Socialist Party had not attacked U.S. territory or harmed its citizens or residents.

The Iraqi people’s ongoing resistance has prevented the withdrawal of U.S. forces that are scheduled to leave by the end of 2011. Resistance organizations inside Iraq have killed more than two dozen U.S. soldiers in recent months.

Journalist Timothy Bancroft-Hinchey cites violations of the Statute of The Hague International Penal Court to provide a legal rationale for charging Washington and NATO countries with war crimes in Libya. He notes that Article 3 of the Statute reads: “Attack or bombardment, by whatever means, against undefended cities, towns, villages, buildings or houses” violates international law. “NATO’s continuous use of civilian targets for military purposes, a scenario which this military organization wantonly and callously calls ‘collateral damage,’ fits this clause exactly and would be the cornerstone of a case accusing this organization of being guilty of war crimes.” (prava.ru, July 25)

The article also points to a clause on “Massive destruction of cities, towns or villages or destruction not justified by military necessity.” The author stresses, “The attack on Libya’s water supply network on July 22 and the attack on the factory making pipes for the supply system on July 23 in al-Brega were not covered under ‘military necessity’ in which case, under Article 3, this was an act of wanton destruction of civilian structures with

military hardware.”

Other violations include use of chemical weapons in al-Brega, support for an armed insurgency against a U.N.-member state, and failure to work toward a negotiated settlement to resolve conflict within a particular country.

The U.S./NATO alliance and their surrogates in Libya have rejected numerous efforts by the African Union to broker a ceasefire inside the country. The arming of TNC forces and their recognition by the NATO states further impedes these peace efforts.

Anti-war opposition spreads across U.S.

Despite the corporate media’s virtual silence on the widespread opposition to the U.S./NATO bombing of Libya, protests have occurred throughout the country. The International Action Center’s national tour has brought out hundreds of people in each of the cities to hear former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney. She visited Libya earlier this year and witnessed first-hand Pentagon and NATO destruction.

Major efforts are underway in Detroit to build an Aug. 27 rally featuring McKinney at the University of Michigan Detroit Center. Co-sponsors include the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice, the National Conference of Black Lawyers Michigan Chapter, the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, the Freedom Road Socialist Organization and Workers World Party.

MECAWI activists plan to do massive outreach for the event and in defense of Libya at an Eastside community speak-out on Aug. 13 and at the African World Festival the following week. □

Cynthia McKinney draws hundreds on Libya

ters and the International Action Center.

Speakers recounted Libya’s historical development from a colony to a nation that distributed the proceeds of its oil wealth to its citizens and to support African liberation. The country’s leadership in advancing African unity was lauded.

Those on the program criticized the imperial aims of the United States and European powers who seek to gain control of Libya’s oil and gas resources and to establish a compliant government in North Africa. They also told of the social achievements of Libya’s unique government structure.

McKinney blasted the corporate media for its unrelenting demonization of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi and their cheerleading of a “humanitarian” war. She de-

clared to the enthusiastic crowd that she would never be a “team player for war” but was representing the “peace team” on her travels around the world.

Minister Akbar Mohammed, NOI International Minister and attorney Ramsey Clark, IAC founder and prominent anti-war activist, were also featured speakers.

Dianne Mathiowetz, coordinator of the Atlanta IAC, prompted the audience to become engaged “from this day forward in building and sustaining a movement to end this war and all wars of capitalist domination.”

The IAC is sponsoring a multi-city tour for the Dignity Delegation. For additional information about the Truth Tour and to contribute to defray expenses, see www.iacenter.org. □

Report from Libya: Impact of U.S. war in Africa

More than 120 days of U.S./NATO bombing of LIBYA
16,000 bombing sorties

Hear former U.S. Congressperson Cynthia McKinney, who recently returned from leading a delegation to Libya in opposition to the U.S. criminal destruction of Libya, and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Akbar Muhammad & other leading opponents of the U.S. war on Libya.

New VIDEO footage of U.S. war on Libya. The national educational & fundraising Report from LIBYA tour with Cynthia McKinney is organized by International Action Center, www.IACenter.org in coordination with many antiwar and community organizations from July 7 to August 9, 2011.

1 cruise missile could pay 10 teachers for a year.
We need jobs, health care & education,
not budget cuts, prisons and war.

NEW YORK MEETING
JULY 30 Saturday 5 pm
THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH
122 St & Riverside Dr, New York, NY
In coordination with:
The Riverside Church Prison Ministries and Stop the War on Libya Coalition:
(List in formation) AMA American Muslim Alliance, American Muslim Task Force, Nation of Islam, Freedom Party, Answer Coalition, Black is Back Coalition, December 12 Movement, The Dignity Delegation, International Action Center & others.

For more information and a complete list of cities or to help donate for the tour expenses see: www.IACenter.org or call: 212-633-6646

STOP U.S./NATO WAR ON LIBYA!

IN HARLEM
MILLIONS MARCH
END

•BOMBING of Libya
•ILLEGAL SANCTIONS on Zimbabwe
•BLOOMBERG'S DESTRUCTION of 'Education, Housing' Healthcare

HON. MINISTER LOUIS FARRAKHAN
Saturday, August 13, 2011
Assembly: 10 AM at 170th Street and Malcolm X Blvd. (Lenox Ave.)

Speakers (Partial List):
*Dr. Molefi Asante (Afrocentricity International), *Wanda Plummer (December 12th Movement)
*Father Miguel d'Escoto (former Foreign Minister of Nicaragua & President of UN 63rd General Assembly)

Nation of Islam, December 12th Movement, World African Diaspora Union, Freedom Party, All African People's Revolutionary Party, National Black United Front, 100% Continental Chapter, Bureau, Dr. Leonard Jeffries, *WALL, New Black Panther Party, Politics Louisiana Coalition, Revolutionary Power, International Action Center, CUNY/PA, *WISDOM, People's Organization for Progress, *ADW, *Clement Payne Movement, Global African Congress, People's Empowerment Party, Culture Change, American People's Freedom Committee, National African People's Organization, 1st LITE in Toronto.

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Negociaciones presupuestarias dirigidas contra el Seguro Social y Medicare

Wall Street y los ricos logran lo que quieren

Por Fred Goldstein

Hasta los más furiosos recortadores de presupuesto en Wall Street están presionando por un aumento en el tope de la deuda. Los banqueros y los patronos estaban contentos de ver a la extrema derecha republicana jugar con el incumplimiento con el fin de obtener reducciones en el Seguro Social, el Medicare y el Medicaid. Ya han logrado que el Presidente Barack Obama ponga los recortes al Seguro Social y otras prestaciones en la mesa de negociaciones.

Pero al aproximarse el 2 de agosto, fecha en que se cumplirá la mora, los banqueros y financieros quieren que el juego cese. Ellos quieren que la capacidad de endeudamiento del gobierno capitalista se expanda más allá de los \$14,3 billones de dólares (trillones en USA) actuales.

¿Por qué? Porque en primer lugar, el Tesoro tiene que pedir prestado \$500 mil millones el 2 de agosto para refinanciar deudas a los tenedores de bonos. Dos días más tarde, \$87 mil millones en bonos del Tesoro tienen que ser pagados. (Secretario del Tesoro, Timothy Geithner, CNBC Squawk Box, 18 de julio) Ese es el pan de cada día de los tiburones prestamistas multimillonarios de Wall Street. Ellos se enriquecen cada vez más por el cobro de los intereses sobre la deuda pública.

La mora pondría en peligro los pagos a los mercaderes de la muerte en el complejo militar-industrial que reciben cientos de miles de millones de dólares para suministrar a las guerras en Afganistán, Pakistán y Libia, así como la ocupación de Irak. Ellos también suministran a los regímenes reaccionarios por todo el mundo, desde el gobierno de criminales paramilitares en Colombia y la monarquía feudal de Arabia Saudita, hasta el gobierno títere de Corea del Sur.

En segundo lugar, el incumplimiento daría lugar a desembolsos por los bancos, compañías de seguros y financieros tras bastidores, quienes se verían obligados a pagar grandes sumas de dinero, ya que aseguraron los bonos del gobierno en caso de que no se pagaran. Esto podría precipitar una gran crisis financiera. Nadie sabe lo que ocurriría en los mercados financieros globales.

En tercer lugar, los banqueros temen una revuelta social de la población si millones de cheques del gobierno para el Seguro Social, Medicare, Medicaid, por incapacidad, seguro por desempleo, cupones de alimento, Asistencia Temporal para Familias Necesitadas, para el programa de nutrición de Mujeres, Infantes y Niños y otros programas, no se pagan a tiempo.

Por lo que han enviado mensajes al líder republicano del Senado Mitch McConnell y al presidente republicano de la Cámara John Boehner, así como al Presidente Obama y a los líderes del Partido Demócrata, para que encuentren una forma de salir del estancamiento. McConnell ha ofrecido una forma complicada que en última instancia, permitiría a Obama tomar prestado \$2,5 billones más. McConnell está negociando los términos con el líder demócrata del Senado, Harry Reid. El resultado está por verse. Pero los/as

trabajadores/as deben recordar el poder que ejerce Wall Street, cuando los/as republicanos derechistas votaron en contra del plan de rescate bancario de \$700 mil millones en 2008. Los/as legisladores fueron forzados/as a cambiar su voto el día siguiente de forma humillante. Wall Street normalmente se sale con la suya.

El capitalismo no puede librarse de esta crisis

Pase lo que pase en la lucha por el límite de la deuda, nada puede borrar el hecho subyacente de que EE.UU. y Europa, los principales centros del capitalismo mundial junto a Japón, no pueden librarse de una deuda creciente e insostenible. Una deuda insostenible es precursora de crisis financiera, bancarrota y mora.

La crisis del techo de la deuda y la crisis de deuda europea surgen de la crisis general del capitalismo mundial. Los líderes europeos se reunirían el 21 de julio para hablar una vez más sobre la crisis griega. Los banqueros europeos forzaron al gobierno griego a pasar medidas de austeridad que atacan a la clase obrera griega con la promesa de un rescate de \$150 mil millones de dólares. Sin embargo, los banqueros no pueden ponerse de acuerdo sobre el rescate. Han estado lidiando con este problema desde febrero de 2010.

Se supone que iban a reunirse para discutir sobre el rescate de Grecia. Pero ahora las economías de España e Italia están cayendo más profundamente en crisis económica y financiera. Italia y España son la tercera y cuarta economías mayores de la zona euro. Juntas representan el 28 por ciento de la economía de la zona. Si agregamos a Portugal y Grecia, una tercera parte de la economía europea está ahora en un estado de crisis financiera.

¿Qué es lo que esto muestra? Durante la crisis económica y financiera del 2007 al 2009, el gobierno de Estados Unidos, a través de su Tesoro y Reserva Federal, además de los bancos europeos, entregó más de 14 billones de dólares a los bancos y a las empresas. Eso fue antes del rescate griego y antes de que Ben Bernanke, jefe de la Reserva Federal de Estados Unidos, comprara \$600 mil millones de dólares en bonos del Tesoro para apuntalar la economía de Estados Unidos.

Aún así, el sistema no puede librarse de la crisis.

La sobreproducción y la deuda

Debajo de las crisis de la deuda está la crisis de sobreproducción capitalista. Los gobiernos capitalistas están en la ruina porque sus ingresos han caído durante la crisis. Y la crisis ha sido causada por el hecho de que la producción capitalista ha crecido tanto que ha sobrepasado la capacidad de las masas de comprar lo que se produce. Por lo que las fábricas, centros comerciales, tiendas y oficinas se cierran. Los/as trabajadores/as

son despedidos/as o pierden sus puestos de trabajo permanentemente. Esta “solución” capitalista sólo aumenta la crisis.

Los gobiernos capitalistas han gastado billones de dinero del pueblo para mantener a flote la clase capitalista. Y los patronos han agarrado cada moneda posible que han recibido del gobierno. Además, han reducido los salarios, acelerado el ritmo del trabajo, instalado equipos de alta tecnología para eliminar puestos de trabajo y han contratado el trabajo a países con salarios bajos.

Pero los patronos no han creado puestos de trabajo con todo el dinero que han recibido del gobierno. Y no van a crear puestos de trabajo.

No han invertido en crear puestos de trabajo porque saben que los/as trabajadores/as están sobreviviendo apenas o están arruinados/as, por lo que no pueden comprar los productos que se crearían por un aumento en la producción. Los capitalistas están destruyendo su propio mercado.

De hecho, según el periodista sobre economía David Leonhardt, la industria automotriz en Estados Unidos está tratando de vender ahora 28 por ciento menos coches de lo que vendieron hace 10 años, cuando había una recesión. Además, aunque la población ha aumentado desde entonces, las ventas de hornos y estufas también están disminuyendo y las ventas de casas han descendido a su punto más bajo desde que comenzó la crisis. (New York Times, 16 de julio)

Los servicios, incluyendo las comidas en restaurantes, entretenimiento, educación e incluso los seguros, disminuyeron un 7 por ciento, más del doble de cualquier caída anterior. Las ventas al por menor han bajado. Una vez más, los economistas burgueses están reduciendo sus proyecciones de crecimiento económico.

En todo esto, los capitalistas no financieros en los Estados Unidos están sentados sobre 2 billones de dólares en efectivo, una cantidad récord. Las 1.000 empresas no financieras más grandes del mundo están sentadas sobre 3,4 billones de dólares.

¿Qué están haciendo con este dinero en efectivo?

Según los reportes federales del Flujo de Fondos, están usando la mayor parte para especular en moneda extranjera. (Josh Dwyer, sitio de Internet Common Dreams, 18 de julio) Pero los patronos dicen que necesitan exenciones de impuestos para poder crear empleos. La ver-

dad es que no crearán empleos. Éste es el sistema de ganancias. Los empleos solamente serán creados por las empresas privadas si los productos y los servicios pueden ser vendidos obteniendo ganancias. Los patronos no solamente no están creando empleos, sino que están llenando sus cuentas bancarias.

Otro uso de sus ganancias es para darse

sueños más altos. En el 2010, los jefes ejecutivos de las 500 compañías del S&P se pagaron un promedio de \$11,4 millones cada uno — un aumento del 23 por ciento sobre el año previo. Mientras tanto, los sueldos de los/as trabajadores/as están decayendo. El desempleo está aumentando. El hambre y el desamparo están aumentando.

Las clases capitalistas en Europa y en los EE.UU. están en un callejón sin salida. El sistema no puede seguir adelante. La crisis de los/as capitalistas se hace la crisis de los/as trabajadores/as. Es nuestra crisis porque el sistema de los patronos ya no funciona. Está empezando a arrastrar a toda la sociedad hacia un abismo.

Ellos quieren que los/as trabajadores/as paguen sus deudas. Si no hay un incumplimiento de pago, es el dinero nuestro de los impuestos el que será usado para pagar esos \$500 mil millones a los tenedores de bonos el 2 de agosto y esos \$87 mil millones el 4 de agosto.

Ese es el dinero que podría y debería ser usado para crear un programa masivo de empleos para poner a trabajar a los/as millones de desempleados/as.

Medio millón de trabajadores/as del gobierno ha perdido su trabajo en los últimos dos años. Y mientras desaparece la asistencia federal a los estados, más trabajadores/as públicos/as van a enfrentar despidos o reducciones de empleo, o ambos. La extensión del seguro por desempleo está proyectada para agotarse este año. Más y más trabajadores/as han alcanzado su límite de 99 semanas y no tienen ningún otro recurso para sobrevivir.

Frente a todas estas penurias de la clase trabajadora, la Casa Blanca, el Congreso y todos los expertos económicos están discutiendo cuántos billones de dólares deben ser recortados de los servicios sociales y los programas de ayuda social en la próxima década — recortes que solamente resultarán en menos gasto de consumo y menos empleos.

Pero nuestra clase, la clase trabajadora, no debe ser la responsable por las deudas a millonarios y multimillonarios que se benefician de los rescates del gobierno y viven exprimiendo ganancias de los/as trabajadores/as a través de la explotación capitalista. El dinero fue prestado en primer lugar para pagar por sus guerras, para exenciones de impuestos para las compañías de petróleo y otras corporaciones gigantes, y para pagar intereses a los banqueros por préstamos previos.

El dinero de los impuestos de los/as trabajadores/as fue derrochado en los/as ricos en vez de ser usado para necesidades socialmente útiles como proveer cuidado de salud y educación gratis y de calidad para todos/as, buenos empleos con todos los beneficios de jubilación, viviendas a bajo costo, parques, zonas de juego infantil, bibliotecas, centros comunitarios, clínicas, etc.

La clase trabajadora debe separarse de la discusión de la clase dominante sobre cuánto cortar de nuestras vidas. Tenemos que ver cómo impedir que esta crisis caiga sobre nuestros hombros y cómo devolverla a los/as capitalistas quienes la causaron en primer lugar. □

